

6.0 Indirect/Secondary Impacts

The US Highway 53 Virginia to Eveleth Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) (December 2014) is incorporated by reference and is considered part of the Final EIS. Parts of Chapter 6 from the Draft EIS are repeated here, but it has been abbreviated to focus only on the preferred alternative.

6.1 Changes Since the Draft EIS

There have been no changes in the project setting or regulatory context or new technical studies since the Draft EIS that affect the indirect/secondary impacts analysis.¹ Changes in the project are described in Section 2.3.1. The refined alternative now includes a modified access median at Cuyuna and Vermillion Drives.

The closure of the median at Cuyuna Drive has potential for indirect impacts to business access; however, the proposed median break at Vermillion Drive allows for continued access to these businesses and the neighborhood.

The impacts of the preferred alternative as reported in the Draft EIS are summarized in Section 6.2.

6.2 Impacts of the Preferred Alternative

Minimal changes to businesses along US 53 will be expected given that the traffic patterns will not change substantially under the preferred alternative due to the limited possibility of induced changes in land use or traffic. The lands adjacent to the preferred alternative will not be likely to change in their use, as they are on state land primarily reserved for recreational or mining use or on land that is already developed. However, the land outside the mine lands near the new intersection locations for 2nd Avenue and for MN 135 may experience a change to highway-related commercial business such as gas stations, convenience stores, coffee shops, or restaurants given changes in access and visibility. A number of these parcels are currently vacant or underdeveloped and may be available for new or redevelopment opportunities. If these parcels have wetlands, the proposed developments will be required to comply with current wetland permit requirements, including mitigation plans.

6.3 Mitigation

No mitigation is required for the US 53 project.

¹ According to the Council on Environmental Quality, an indirect impact is caused by a specific project or action but later in time or farther away, yet is still reasonably foreseeable.